Isaac expected to bring rain to Carolinas

BY BRUCE SMITH
ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHARLESTON — Tropical Storm Isaac is expected to pump tropical moisture into the Carolinas during the coming days, bringing rain to some areas where it's badly needed but raising concerns about flash flooding in other areas that have been soaked in recent weeks.

The storm, projected to make landfall today as a hurricane somewhere on the Gulf Coast, could bring between 1 to 4 inches of rain, South Carolina state climatologist Hope Mizzell said Monday.

Rain is in the forecast for the next several days as moisture from the remnants of the storm after landfall are pushed east.

That rain is needed in the central Savannah River valley where five counties — Abbeville, Aiken, Barnwell, Edgefield and McCormick — are considered to be in a severe drought. Nine other nearby counties are in a moderate drought while incipient drought conditions exist in the rest of the state.

Only a small section of southeastern North Carolina is considered to be in drought, although several other sections of the state are considered to be abnormally dry.

Rainfall totals during the month of August in South Carolina range from almost 17 inches near Cleveland in the Upstate to below normal totals of less than 4 inches in Florence, Pawleys Island, Hilton Head, York and Anderson.

Lakes along the Savannah River remain low, largely because of evaporation during a hot summer, she said.

"If you look at the forecast, it calls for rain all week. This is not the typical tropical system where it comes through, dumps rain and it's gone," Mizzell said. A slower moving system over several days does much more to replenish ground water levels, she added.

There is a different concern in North Carolina where emergency managers have been watching Isaac for a week, said Julia Jarema, a spokeswoman for the Emergency Management Office in the North Carolina Department of Public Safety.

"We had flooding problems in Northampton and Halifax counties over the weekend, but it had nothing to do with Isaac," she said. "We have had a lot of rain recently and some areas have had more than usual. Depending on how it comes in and how long it stays, flooding is always a concern."



ASSOCIATED PRESS

A man dives into a large wave caused by Tropical Storm Isaac on Monday in Gulf Shores, Ala. The storm, projected to make landfall today as a hurricane somewhere on the Gulf Coast, could bring between 1 to 4 inches of rain, South Carolina state climatologist Hope Mizzell said Monday.